Borrell visits Latin America: high time to re-engage

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The Diplomatic Service of the European Union

Maybe far in distance but so close to us. Latin America & the Caribbean is a part of the world with which we have great political, historical and cultural affinity, and very important institutional and economic ties unite us. On his first trip to the region under his mandate, EU High Representative Josep Borrell has visited Peru and Brazil, two key Latin American partners for the EU, with a clear objective: to give a new impetus to the EU's engagement with LAC

Why does Latin America & the Caribbean matter to the European Union? We share centuries of history and above all, many common values. European companies have invested in Latin America more than in China, Japan, Russia and India combined. We are their main partner in development. This region accounts for 50% of the world's biodiversity. Moreover, it has an enormous growth potential. The two regions have developed one of the most integrated partnerships, having concluded 27 association, trade or political and cooperation agreements. This partnership is of great geostrategic relevance, with EU and LAC countries accounting for more than a third of the UN membership, and provides and impetus for a strong and rules-based multilateral order and an

ambitious international response to global issues such as sustainable development, climate change, human rights and fair and free trade.

*If Europe wants to have influence as a geopolitical actor, it has to pay more attention to Latin America and the Caribbean (***Josep Borrell)**

During his two-day visit to Peru, Borrell held talks with the Peruvian Foreign Minister Óscar Maúrtua and was received by the President of the Republic Pedro Castillo and the President of the Congress Maria del Carmen Alva. He also met with the Minister for Economy and Finance Pedro Francke, the Minister of Foreign Trade and Tourism, Roberto Sanchez, several regional governors and representatives of the civil society.

With Minister Maúrtua, the HR/VP announced the imminent launch of joint project to combat gender violence, and the signing of a cooperation agreement related to universal health insurance worth 14 million and the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding on political dialogue and sectoral cooperation. They also agreed in principle the text of an agreement for the participation of Peruvian armed forces in EU missions and operations around the world. They also announced the upcoming adoption of the EU's cooperation programme with Peru for the next 6 years (2021-2027).

The EU and Peru signed a cooperation framework agreement in 2002 and a Memorandum of Understanding in 2009, which foresees a mechanism of high-level bilateral consultations. This partnership addresses various sectors of collaboration, such as sustainable and inclusive growth, environmental, human rights and democracy, security and defence, fight against illicit drugs trafficking and migration. The EU and Peru have a comprehensive Trade Agreement since 2012 (provisionally applied since 2013). This substantially opens up markets on both sides and aims to create more transparent and stable conditions for trade and investment. The trade agreement includes commitments on sustainable development and a systematic dialogue with Peruvian and EU civil society on their implementation. Since 2016, Peruvian citizens also benefit of a short-stay visa waivers, to travel to the Schengen area.

https://twitter.com/JosepBorrellF/status/1455657628340736000

Borrell travelled to Brazil as the final destination on his Latin American tour, the first EU High Representative to visit the country in nine years. "I came to reaffirm the strategic importance that we, in the European Union, attach to our relations with Latin America and with Brazil in particular", said Borrell after his meeting with the Foreign Affairs Minister Carlos Alberto Franco França. They signed a Memorandum of Understanding on international cooperation that will allow Brazil and the EU to join forces on projects with other partner countries to contribute to the implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

https://twitter.com/JosepBorrellF/status/1456330903861485569

He also met with President Jair Bolsonaro, with whom he exchanged views on environment and climate, and post-pandemic recovery. Borrell stressed the importance of the EU and Brazil as global actors.

The HR/VP made a stop in São Paulo to meet with representatives from the business sector, where they highlighted the importance of EU-Brazil trade relations and discussed the clear advantages that

the EU-Mercosur agreement could bring for citizens at both sides, including as regards greening our value chains, digital transformation and security.

Brazil was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with the EU, and we have a long and solid partnership. We are the largest investor in Brazil and its second largest trading partner. Brazil is the largest exporter of agricultural and food products to the EU, and is our largest and most important market in Latin America. Cooperation in the multilateral fora also features high in EU relations with Brazil, which will take its 11th term as non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the 2022-23 biennium.

EU-Peru partnership: working together for a fair post-COVID recovery, green transition and stronger rule of law

The EU and Peru work together to address common challenges such as the fight against poverty and social injustice, but also climate change, green transition, drugs smuggling and post-corona recovery. With €81 million in grants allocated between 2014 and 2020, the EU is Peru´s largest provider of cooperation for sustainable development. EU-Peru cooperation for 2021-2027 under the Global Europe instrument will focus on three priority areas: governance and rule of law, circular transition and human development and social inclusion.

Addressing the consequences of COVID-19 and ensuring a sustainable and socially inclusive recovery is a top priority for the European Union. The EU is the second provider of vaccines to Peru (3 million doses exported), and Team Europe has committed €3 billion to support the most vulnerable in addressing the consequences of the pandemic in the Latin America and Caribbean region. A good example of this is the EU-funded ILO Project “Strengthening social protection from unemployment in Peru”, aimed at institutionalizing a protection mechanism in the country in close cooperation with the Ministries of Labour and Finance.

During their meeting, Peruvian FM Maúrtua and HR/VP Borrell announced the imminent launch of a major cooperation project against gender-based violence, another issue of concern to both parties. The EU currently provides trainings to key Peruvian institutions working to end violence against women, and funds projects focusing on gender equality and women´s participation in the labour market, such as ‘Las mujeres con talento’, which Borrell visited in the Chorrillos neighbourhood of Lima.

HR/VP Josep Borrell visiting an EU-funded project on women empowerment in Lima (Peru).

Fostering a green transition also features high on the cooperation agenda: both the EU and Peru aim to be climate-neutral by 2050, and the EU supports green, climate and environmental action in the Andean country. The EU, for instance, is implementing a programme for regional economic development in seven regions benefiting from innovative pilot projects on low emission, biosecurity, competitive organic value chain and sustainable ecotourism.

The EU and Peru also work together in the fight against drug trafficking and organised crime. The EU´s €17 million ELPAcCTO programme, implemented in cooperation with the Peruvian authorities, provides technical assistance to improve police intelligence and enhance Peru/EU police, penitentiary and justice systems cooperation. This has facilitated Peru´s recent accession to Ameripol, the Police Community of the Americas, which will allow enhanced police operations against transnational organised crime, exchange of information and the constitution of joint investigation teams.

EU-Brazil partnership: joining forces on post-COVID recovery, green transition, digital transformation, academic cooperation, human rights, …

Brazil and the EU have very solid and unique relations based on a comprehensive Strategic Partnership started in 2007, which covers a range of issues including climate change, sustainable energy, the fight against poverty, the Mercosur integration process, stability and prosperity in Latin America. Brazil is a key partner for advancing Green Deal, Digital Transition, Cyber, Human Rights and on a sustainable and inclusive economic recovery from the pandemic.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the fight against COVID-19 and efforts to ensure a sustainable and socially inclusive recovery have been at the center of EU-Brazil cooperation. Team Europe supported 70 actions to prevent and combat the pandemic for the amount of €22.6 million in grants, including information campaigns, basic food baskets and hygiene materials. The EU also mobilised €635 million in loans through the European Investment Bank (EIB) to support Brazil government's emergency aid programs or to support the economic recovery of micro and small businesses in north-eastern Brazil.

Support for LAC's long-term sustainable recovery will be at the heart of the new programmes under the EU's new Global Europe assistance programme, with around €3.4 billion available for the region for the period 2021-27. Concrete initiatives for cooperation with Brazil will be defined under this programme, such as so-called Team Europe Initiatives on "Tropical Forests" and "Sustainable and Smart Cities" and a Team Europe-Brazil Initiative on "Digital Transformation".

EU-Brazil cooperation on digital transformation has taken a great leap forward with the inauguration, in June 2021, of the ELLALINK optical fibre submarine cable, a joint infrastructure connects Brazil and Portugal with the first-ever high capacity direct fibre connection between Europe and South America, and prepares our two continents for a new age of digital cooperation.

The EU and Brazil also work together to tackle Venezuela´s migration and refugee crisis. In Brazil —the largest host country—, EU funding channelled through UNHCR and other UN agencies focuses on supporting the Government´s efforts to receive, protect and integrate Venezuelan communities and respond to COVID-19. HR/VP Josep Borrell had the opportunity to see for himself on his visit to an EU-funded refugee centre.

Human rights and in particular women's empowerment in Brazil is another important topic on the cooperation agenda. During his trip, the HR/VP had an exchange with a group of women human rights defenders where he heard about the impact on the ground of the EU-UN Women partnership projects implemented in the country. This initiative stems from a consolidated EU-Brazil dialogue and cooperation agenda to jointly promote and protect human rights. In this regards both Brazil and the HR/VP recalled the importance of the tenth edition of the EU-Brazil Human Rights Dialogue, to take place in Brazil at the end of November, and of the visit to this country by the EU Special Representative for Human Rights Eamon Gilmore, who will co-chair this Dialogue.

The EU and Brazil also have a strong academic cooperation, including mobility of students, staff and researchers. Between 2015 and 2019, more than 2,400 exchanges took place between the two territories. Brazil is EU's most important partner in Latin America and the Caribbean, accounting for 25% of total LAC participation in the Horizon 2020 programme.

- Press remarks by HR/VP Josep Borrell after meeting with Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs Carlos Alberto Franco França
- EU/Perú: Comunicado Conjunto del Alto Representante Josep Borrell y Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores Oscar Maúrtua
- HR/VP Josep Borrell concluded first visit to Peru
- Factsheet: EU-Peru Partnership
- Factsheet: EU-Brazil Partnership